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SUBJECT: BARBADOS NOMINATION FOR 2009 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE
AWARD

REF: STATE 99729

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) I am pleased to nominate Mary Thompson, RN, of Barbados, for the Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage for 2009 (biodata at end of cable). A highly qualified registered nurse and president of the Business and Professional Women's Club, Mary Thompson has become a leading advocate for developing infrastructure in Barbados to address the consequences of domestic violence and educate and protect women in the country from victimization. End summary.

Mary the Nurse

¶2. (U) A product of the now defunct St. Leonard's Girls school, Mary Thompson was bent on becoming a nurse. After three years of intense study Mary was amongst the first students to graduate with the Associate Degree in Applied Science- General Nursing in 1990, and was one of the first nurses to successfully complete the Advance Cardiac life support course. In December, 2000, Mary left the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) after 10 years of dedicated service and ventured into a relatively new area of nursing- occupational health. In that capacity, she introduced programs and activities that contributed directly to the 500 employees of Barbados Light and Power having significant reductions in time off from work and medical claims while at the same time actively taking responsibility for their own health.

Mary's Contribution to Civic Society

¶3. (U) Mary's interest in domestic violence was piqued when she worked in the emergency room at QEH and intensified while she worked in a private hospital and realized the staggering number of abused women who sought care privately. She has become an advocate on women's issues, particularly the issue of family violence. In her role as president of the Business and Professional Women's Club, she has responsibility for the operations of the lone shelter for battered women in Barbados and supervision of a 24-hour crisis center hotline.

¶4. (U) Mary has been instrumental in organizing and presenting many public awareness and educational programs for teenagers, PTA, churches, other NGOs on health related issues, chronic diseases in Barbados, sexual assault, intimate partner violence and family violence. Mary has also played a pivotal role in the ground work done for soon to be instituted Human Trafficking legislation in Barbados. In conjunction with the Barbados Bureau of Gender Affairs she made public presentations in Speightstown and Heroes Square to create an awareness of the issue of human trafficking.

¶5. (U) In support of her work on domestic violence, Mary has taken

the initiative to become Barbados' first and only trained forensic nurse. She is currently working with Quinnipiac University to organize Elder Abuse training in November for home help workers and nurses working in Geriatric hospitals. In addition, she is working with the Bureau of Gender Affairs to have a Sexual Assault Response Team established in Barbados. This will allow for training of more forensic nurses and allow women who are sexually assaulted to have the dignity of not being revictimized and to be examined by a female nurse.

16. (U) BIODATA

Name: Mary Thompson
Job title : Registered nurse/Midwife, Sexual Assault forensic Examiner
Date of birth: 13th March 1968
Citizenship: Barbadian
Address: Fordes Road, Clapham, St. Michael, Barbados
Telephone: (246) 429-3704 or (246) 234-3015
Passport # 0645019

Ms. Thompson has been contacted about this nomination and is willing to be recognized.

OURISMAN